zipcodes

Location: boundaries\zipcodes

Description
US Postal Service 5-digit zipcode attributes for Bay County, including some draft polygons.

Source
In February 2000, Bay County GIS staff selected zipcodes data for Bay County from an ESRI Data CD, creating a shapefile. In September 2000, Bay County GIS staff added a field for **station** name and 8 records for additional zipcodes. The additional zipcodes were based on the **parcels astzip5** field and the US Postal Service's website http://www.usps.gov/ncsc/lookups/lookups.htm.

In March 2001, Bay County GIS staff added a polygon for zipcode 32410 Mexico Beach.
In October 2001, Bay County GIS staff added a legend field and exported zipcode attributes to **zipcodes_all.dbf**. The shapefile was converted to an ESRI coverage, then converted back to a shapefile, removing attributes not associated with a polygon.

Zipcodes_all.dbf includes 7 zipcodes not associated with a polygon: five zipcodes for PO boxes only and two zipcodes for areas outside and possibly in Bay County. Some sources show zipcode 32456 as Mexico Beach, but that needs to be confirmed. Zipcode 32461 as Rosemary Beach outside of Bay County needs to be confirmed too. Zipcodes_all.dbf is useful for joining to parcels.

Tabular and spatial data needs to be verified with the US Postal Service and the latest Census Bureau TIGER/ZIP+4 file. See notes below from USPS website.

This data is provided with the understanding that the conclusions drawn from such information are solely the responsibilities of the user. The GIS data is not a legal representation of the features depicted, and any assumption of the legal status of this data is hereby disclaimed. Errors or omissions should be reported to the Bay County GIS Division 850-784-6171.

Attribute Table Structure

Item Name	Width	Output	Type	Decimals
zip	5	5	C	-
po_name	32	32	C	-
state	2	2	C	-
station	40	40	C	-
sumblkpop	11	11	I	0
pop1999	9	9	I	0
label	50	50	C	-

Attributes

zip
US Postal Service 5-digit zip code.

po_name
Post office name.

state
US Postal Service state abbreviation

station
Station name, based on phone book references and geographical location.
Verify with US Postal Service someday.

sumblkpop
Sum of the 1990 population for the US Bureau of the Census Block polygon centroids created by aggregating the populations of each block which fell within the zipcode area boundary.

pop1999
Total 1999 population for a zipcode area estimated by CACI International, Inc.

label
Label combining **po_name** and **station**

legend
Field useful for legend, combining **zip** and **label**

NOTES FROM USPS WEBSITE

March 7, 2001: http://www.usps.gov/ncsc/lookups/zip_faqs.htm#a11

Where can I get a database that cross-references ZIP Codes with latitudes and longitudes? Is there a ZIP Code centroid file or ZIP Code maps available?

The Postal Service does not maintain ZIP Code maps, and the only related product we offer at this time is the TIGER/ZIP+4 File. This file relates ZIP+4 codes to Census Bureau data (e.g., latitude, longitude, track, Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area (SMSA), etc.). For more information about the TIGER/ZIP+4 File, call the National Customer Support Center at (800) 238-3150.

In addition, there are many commercial software products available with geographic information. Check with your local software store or search the Internet for related Web sites.

March 8, 2001: http://ftp.census.gov/cgi-bin/geo/tigerfaq?Q17

Q17: Does the ZIP Code file you have available for downloading contain a complete and up-to-date list of ZIP Codes?

The ZIP file doesn't include all ZIP Codes because it was based only on those areas For which we had city-style addresses (which leaves out a lot of rural areas). The file was created as a byproduct of another operation (a data product based on the ZIP codes we collected with the 1990 Census data). For this Census data product, we took advantage of the fact that we had some ZIP Code data as a consequence of trying to collect addresses for the Census questionnaire mailout so we published data for those ZIP Codes. This ZIP internal point file is basically the lat/long for the ZIPS in that product. We put it on the Web in case anyone found it useful. It was not intended to be an authoritative source on ZIP Codes.

Note that the task of creating a lat/long or polygon file of all ZIP Codes is not as easy as it seems since ZIP Codes are not designed to be polygons and can't easily be forced into them - particularly in rural areas. To our knowledge there are no official internal point or polygon files available.

For further information on ZIPs the U.S. Postal Service site may be of interest.

March 8, 2001: http://ftp.census.gov/cgi-bin/geo/tigerfaq?Q18

Q18: Does the Census Bureau produce ZIP Code maps?

The Census Bureau doesn't have a mandate to do ZIP code mapping so we don't claim that any ZIP product we have is definitive or complete. In any case we

don't produce ZIP code maps. There are several commercial mapping firms that produce ZIP Code maps for selected areas, thought not necessarily agreeing with USPS delineations. You can browse their association's Web page for contacts:

http://www.maptrade.org/usstore.html

In addition to the stores listed for your state, I would look for some of the big companies that do mapping around the country listed in California and Maine. To our knowledge no one, not even the USPS, has produced a complete and authoritative ZIP Code map of the entire country.
Another possible source of information is the Postal Service Web site:

http://www.usps.gov/

We have produced, as a by product of other work, a point file containing a calculated internal point. This point was calculated in the computer from the locations of addresses with a specific ZIP Code and not out in the field using the Global Positioning System. Note, since ZIP codes are not specifically designed to be polygons (they are linear postal delivery routes) a given calculated internal point could be well away from the addresses it represents such as addresses clustered along an arc. An example would be addresses along a long arc-shaped street. Also, the file doesn't have ZIP Codes for completely commercial areas or for places with non-city-style addresses (most of the rural areas).

March 8, 2001: http://ftp.census.gov/cgi-bin/geo/tigerfaq?Q19

Q19: Why am I coming up with gaps in coverage when I try to use TIGER/Line files to create ZIP Code polygon coverage for an area?

There are a variety of reasons why you're having this problem. First, we don't have complete ZIP Code coverage in TIGER because we don't have complete address coverage for the entire country. We only have city-style addresses in our data base. P.O. boxes and rural route addresses aren't particularly useful to us for taking the census. We have to use the more traditional "knocking on the door" approach to insure that we have complete coverage. This means our address, and therefore ZIP Code, coverage is not good in the rural areas.

A more basic problem is that ZIP Codes were not developed as polygons by the Postal Service, but as a way to manage mail carrier routes. This means that they are really a collection of linear features (carrier routes) at best. Many, particularly in urban areas, can be encompassed neatly by an imaginary polygon. That can't be done easily (or at least accurately) in many other areas, particularly rural. In rural areas there is not necessarily a complete assignment of all land area to one or another post office. By that I mean, a ZIP Code is really a point feature (assigned to a post office, really a building). It may provide some, or no, house delivery service. People can

more or less go the one that is closest or most convenient for other reasons to get their mail.

The ZIP Code maps produced by mapping companies aren't being made using an authoritative cartographic boundary file coming from the USPS (in our dealings with them we haven't found one). They are the result of these companies making their own judgments and using a variety of sources to come up with an unofficial map.